

Spence

inert matter from their minds, so that they may expel the
knowledge may be not inanimate, but animate, dynamic,
to enable them to exercise influence upon their
scholars. I think that is agreed upon.

Now let me say something about the content
of education, about the things which should be
actually taught in the schools, and I am only going
to talk in the very broadest possible way. In my
afternoon's reading I came upon another very
appropriate remark in the letters of John Stuart Mill.
Let me read it to you:—

"What the poor, as well as the rich, require
is not to be taught other people's opinions,
but to be induced and enabled to think for themselves.
It is not physical science that will do this,
even if they could learn it much more thoroughly
than they are able to do." The young people
of this country are not to be regenerated by
economic doctrine or economic history or physical
science; they can only be elevated by ideas which
act upon the imagination and act upon the
character and influence the soul, and it is the
function of all good teachers to bring those ideas
before them.

PATRIOTISM IN THE SCHOOLS.

I have sometimes heard it said that you should
not teach patriotism in the school. I dissent from
that doctrine. (Cheers.) I think that patriotism
should be taught in the schools. I will tell you
what I mean by patriotism. By patriotism I do
not mean Jingoism, but what I mean by patriotism
is an intelligent appreciation of all things noble
in the romances, in the literature, and in the history
of one's own country. Young people should be
taught to admire what is great while they are at
school. And remember that for the poor of this
country the school is a far more important factor
than it is for the rich people of this country.
rich children in this country have a great number
of influences for good which operate upon their
character. For the poor those influences are more
restricted, and consequently the school plays a
far more important part, and of course the training
college, which influences the school, plays a far
more important part in the formation of character.
Therefore the school is of importance for the wel-
fare of the country, and the most important public
servants of the country, in my opinion, are the
schoolmasters and the schoolmistresses.

I say that I want patriotism in the larger sense
of the term taught in the schools. Of course there
is a great deal to criticize in any country, and I
should be the last person to suggest that the critical
faculty should not be exercised and trained at
school. But before we teach children to criticize
the institutions of their country, before we teach
them to be critical of what is bad, let us teach
them to recognize and admire what is good. After
all life is very short; we all of us have only one
life to live, and during that life let us get into
ourselves as much love, as much admiration, as
much elevating pleasure as we can, and if we view
education merely as discipline in critical bitterness,
then we shall lose all the sweets of life and we
shall make ourselves unnecessarily miserable.
There is quite enough sorrow and hardship in this
world as it is without introducing it prematurely
to young people. There was a time in which the
school was regarded as a kind of penitentiary.
Those days are past. When I go into a school now
the thing that strikes me about it, assuming it is
a good school, is that all the young people are
radiantly happy, and that is a very good start for
a nation. I cannot help believing that some part
of the secret of that delightful geniality which has
distinguished the British Army during the past
four years—(cheers)—has been due to these
different changes in our system of education.

It has given me very great pleasure to address
such a large company of Sheffield friends in this
city. I have not been so often in Sheffield lately
as I should like to have been, but I have followed
with the keenest interest the steps which have been
taken by the Sheffield Education Committee to
expand the educational system in this city, and
my ambition for Sheffield is that Sheffield should
set the pace for the rest of the country, and not
only for the rest of the country, but for the rest
of the world. (Cheers.)

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